

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 949

By Vital

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of William Aaron Gauntt of Lookout Mountain.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Lt. Co. William "Bill" Gauntt (USAF, Ret, POW) of Lookout Mountain; and

WHEREAS, William Gauntt was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born on May 15, 1945, in Greenville, Texas, William Gauntt was the son of the late William Andrew and Ardelia Gauntt; and

WHEREAS, fondly known as "Bill," Mr. Gauntt was a 1968 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy; as captain and pilot in the RF-4C Phantom II, he was shot down over North Vietnam on his 121<sup>st</sup> mission and captured by the enemy, who forced him to walk 300 miles without boots to the prisoner of war camp in Hanoi, where he stayed for nine months until his release; and

WHEREAS, his career as a pilot extended to duty as a combat pilot, instructor pilot, Pentagon assignment, and as an Assistant Base Commander in Germany; Mr. Gauntt went on to receive a master's degree from the United States Air Force Institute of Technology; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gauntt earned numerous awards and accolades throughout his admirable career, including three Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star with a V for Valor, two Purple Hearts, four Meritorious Service Medals, nine Air Medals, two Air Force Commendation Medals, the Prisoner of War Medal, the National Defense Medal, and the Vietnam Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, after his retirement from the Air Force in 1990, Mr. Gauntt began a career in Knoxville as an environmental engineer; his final career was in home health care, caring for elderly patients, a responsibility he performed with honor; and

WHEREAS, having performed his appointed duties in an admirable manner that distinguished him as a credit to both his community and his profession, Mr. Gauntt was a selfless individual who always put others first; and

WHEREAS, also deeply devoted to his family, he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gauntt will be fondly remembered but sadly mourned by his daughter, Andrea Gauntt, and grandsons, Braedon, Carson, and Lucas Stoy; his son, Peter (Jennifer) Gauntt; his sister, Gean Chapman; his brother, Don (Carol) Gauntt; his wife of thirty-three years, Nancy Powell Gauntt and family, Chris Wilson, Debbie Wilson, Brooke (Andy) Pippenger, and Ashley (Drew) Vonderahe and grandchildren, Parker, Barrett, Lizzie and Carter Wilson; Wiley, Janie and Marguerite Pippenger; and Annie and Wilson Vonderahe; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, Mr. Gauntt was preceded in death by a brother, Michael Gauntt; and

WHEREAS, William Gaunt leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of William Aaron Gauntt, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Gauntt.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to

the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.